

Minutes

Arkansas State Board of Optometry

Conference Call

April 7, 2020

Dr. Bryant Ashley, Board President, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. with all Board members on the call. Others on the call were Dr. Howard Flippin, Board Executive Director, Ms. Bonita Wineman, Board assistant, and Mr. Kevin O'Dwyer, Board attorney.

Dr. Ashley opened the meeting declaring the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Department of Health directive concerning eye care during the pandemic and to devise our Board memo to address the situation. Dr. Ashley read a rough draft covering the ADH directive to our licensees. The directive says routine eye care SHALL cease.

Dr. Ford replied that he felt that this issue is not cut and dried. There is latitude in urgent and emergent care decision. This care is at doctor's discretion. Optometry is included in the elective surgery directive due to our "procedures" which are not, for the most part, surgical. Some OD's are still practicing.

Mr. O'Dwyer reported that the directive says no routine eye care. Routine eye care should be postponed. Emergent and urgent care may need to be defined. This was thought to be very difficult.

Dr. Hennessey reported that he was aware of many instances where Board communications are not reaching all licensees. He recommended a mailing with ADH guidelines and a Board cover letter. Also, this situation should be enforced, and licensees should be informed of this.

After additional comments and discussion, Dr. Hennessey made a motion to send a letter and copy of Department of Health guidelines to all licensees and begin enforcement activities. Dr. Ginger made a second. The motion passed.

Dr. Ashley reminded the Board of the April 23, 2020 Board meeting which will be by conference call at 1:30 p.m. He reported that Dr. Hennessey and Ford will report on Telemedicine and Artificial Intelligence. Board policy on continuing education online will be reviewed. NBEO exams and clinical exams are sporadic, and some states are waiving NBEO requirements for a year to allow licensure in a timely manner. Optometric colleges are reporting that 4th years will graduate this spring. June 18 will be Board exams at 8 am and Board meeting in afternoon.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 1:30 pm April 23, 2020 by conference call. Remaining meeting for 2020 are June 18 (meeting and exam), August 13, October 8, and November 19. Jurisprudence course is October 16 (Rogers). ARBO annual is tentatively scheduled for June 21-23 (Alexander, VA).

Dr. Hennessey made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Ford made a second. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Dr. Bryant Ashley, President

Dr. Robert W. Smalling, Secretary/Treasurer